Mountain Weather Forecast

Northwest Highlands

Including Sutherland, Ben Wyvis, Wester Ross, The Cuillin, Glen Affric, Glen Shiel and Knoydart
Forecast valid from 00:00 on Thursday 21 Dec 2023 until 23:59 on Friday 22 Dec 2023

Forecast Issued on Wednesday 20 Dec 2023 at 16:53 by Met Office Aberdeen

Confidence: High for remaining very changeable and windy, and for storm force winds on Thursday. Medium for details, falling low from later Friday onwards especially regarding the boundary of mild and cold air and snow levels on Friday and early Saturday.

Headline for Thursday 21 Dec 2023: A stormy day with frequent showers turning increasingly to snow.

Mountain weather hazards on Thursday 21 Dec 2023

Blizzards
Low Likelihood

Gales
High Likelihood

Thunderstorms
Low Likelihood

Heavy persistent snow
Low Likelihood

Severe chill effect
High Likelihood

Heavy persistent rain
Low Likelihood

Storm force winds
High Likelihood

Poor visibility
Medium Likelihood

Strong sunlight
Low Likelihood

Weather and chance of precipitation at 800m							
Time							
00:00	03:00	06:00	09:00	12:00	15:00	18:00	21:00
Heavy Rain	Heavy Rain	Heavy rain showers (night)	Heavy snow showers	Heavy snow showers	Light snow	Heavy snow showers (night)	Heavy snow showers (night)
Precipitation probability							
>95%	80%	60%	60%	60%	50%	60%	60%

Forecast for Thursday 21 Dec 2023

Weather: Cloudy overnight with persistent heavy rain in the early hours, this turning showery later in the night, showers turning to snow above 800m by dawn. Daylight hours will bringing frequent showers and some bright or sunny intervals. The showers quite heavy and blustery, falling as snow initially above 700-800m but as it turns colder from the north, they will turn to snow down to 500m by afternoon, perhaps to 300m later in the far north. Limited fresh snowfalls but where they do occur some blowing or drifting is likely in the very strong winds.

Chance of cloud-free hill tops above 800m: 10% in early hours, rising 50% by daylight hours.

Low cloud and visibility: Extensive cloud at 450-750m in early hours with poor visibility in heavy rain below the cloud. The cloud breaking and lifting to nearer 1000m by daybreak, with good visibility away from showers, but near showers bases could fall to 600m with poor visibility outwith cloud as heavier snow showers pass through.

Check our weather forecast every day to get the most accurate and up to date information
https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/specialist-forecasts/mountain
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Forecast for Thursday 21 Dec 2023

Height (m)	Wind Speed mean/gusts (mph)					Wind Direction (blowing from)			
	00:00	03:00	06:00	09:00	12:00	15:00	18:00	21:00	00:00
1000	57/71 W	70/89 W	66/84 W	59/77 NW	50/65 NW	46/60 NW	44/57 NW	41/54 NW	40/53 W
900	54/68 W	67/86 W	62/80 W	57/74 NW	47/62 NW	44/58 NW	41/55 NW	39/52 NW	37/50 W
600	38/51 W	46/64 W	42/60 W	38/55 NW	32/47 NW	30/44 NW	28/41 NW	27/39 NW	25/38 W
300	14/52 W	21/68 W	18/63 W	18/59 NW	15/49 NW	14/46 NW	13/42 NW	12/40 NW	12/38 NW
Glen	23/46 W	29/57 W	29/55 W	27/50 NW	23/44 NW	21/41 NW	19/36 NW	18/35 NW	18/34 NW

Height (m)	Temperature / Feels Like (°C)								
	00:00	03:00	06:00	09:00	12:00	15:00	18:00	21:00	00:00
1000	3/-5	3/-7	1/-10	-1/-12	-2/-13	-3/-13	-3/-13	-3/-12	-3/-12
900	4/-4	3/-6	2/-8	-0/-11	-1/-11	-2/-12	-2/-12	-2/-11	-2/-11
600	6/-0	6/-1	4/-3	2/-6	1/-6	1/-7	1/-7	1/-7	1/-6
300	8/4	8/4	7/2	4/-1	4/-1	3/-1	3/-2	3/-1	3/-1
Glen	10/6	10/6	9/5	7/2	7/2	6/2	6/2	6/1	6/2
Freezing Level*	1600m	1400m	1100m	800m	700m	600m	600m	600m	600m

**Level above which ground is expected to be frozen/snow is expected to settle.*

Met Office Aberdeen Meteorologist's View

Storm force winds with gusts around 100mph possible on exposed ridges and summits in morning, where any mobility will be almost impossible with a high risk of being blown off your feet. Note also the extremely low feels like temperatures.

Forecast for Friday 22 Dec 2023

Weather: Cloudy with occasional showers, snow falling above 600m in south and to 300m in north. More persistent rain and snow will develop in the evening, turning to rain at all levels over Skye and southernmost parts of the mainland, but remaining as snow in the north down to 450m, the location boundary of the mild and cold air likely to be uncertain, but sharp.

Maximum wind: Though not as windy as Thursday, west to northwesterly winds will remain strong, around 35 gusts 50mph. Winds perhaps becoming more variable in direction in the evening.

Chance of cloud-free hill tops above 800m: 20% or less.

Low cloud and visibility: Extensive cloud at 600-800m with lower patches. Poor visibility even outwith cloud at times, in heavier rain, or and where there is still snow falling.

Temperature:
Glens: Plus 4 Celsius, falling Plus 2 in the north, but rising Plus 8 in south.
At 800m: Minus 3 Celsius, rising to zero in the south in the afternoon and Plus 3 in the evening, little change in the north.
Freezing level: At first, 500m, but rising 800m in the south in the afternoon, and above summits in the evening, but little change in the north

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